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SUBJECT: New Indian CG's Major Complaint - Lack of Access

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¶1. (SBU) During a brief introductory call, Indian Consul General Indra Mani Pandey expressed surprise and dismay over the lack of access to senior local government and communist party leadership. Shortly after arriving on January 20, he placed requests to meet Guangdong Party Secretary Wang Yang as well as Governor Huang Huahua. He opined that Guangdong's Foreign Affairs Office had yet to respond to those requests or even offer a meeting with Vice Governor. Pandey said he doubted the delays were due to either Chinese New Year holidays or recent border dust ups between India and China, assigning the blame to indifference and bureaucracy. He observed that China routinely took the U.S. and India to task over the Dalai Lama.

¶2. (SBU) Pandey estimated around 10,000 Indian citizens resided in his consular district, which includes the provinces of Fujian, Guangdong, Guangxi, Hainan, Yunnan, Sichuan, and Hunan. He understood nearly 3,000 are university students and that most attend medical schools in Guangdong. A handful of small Indian-invested firms had sprung up, such as restaurants and yoga training centers, but Indian businessmen complained about China's complex, confusing, and opaque investment and business environment. Trade between south China and India is growing, Pandey said, with China importing Indian raw materials and exporting machinery. He predicted limited bilateral trade growth as the two countries are largely competitors producing similar products, in his view.

¶3. (SBU) Bio info: Pandey speaks Arabic and has had tours in Cairo, Damascus, Kabul, Islamabad, and Geneva; he does not speak Chinese. His wife Sushma and daughter accompanied him to Guangzhou from his most recent assignment in New Delhi. Pandey said he is on friendly terms with Pakistani Consul General Mohammad Iftikhar Anjum as the two live in the same apartment complex and their Consulate offices are in close proximity.

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